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FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 000167

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [MP](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MA](#)

SUBJECT: EAC CONVENED MARCH 9 TO DISCUSS TRIPWIRES,
AUTHORIZED DEPARTURE AND SECURITY FORCES ABILITY TO
MAINTAIN ORDER

11. (SBU) This information has previously been reported through alternate channels. An Emergency Action Committee (EAC), chaired by DCM Stromayer, was convened on March 9, 2009 at the DCR to review the trip wires in light of the recent events and discuss the possibility of authorized departure (AD). The ability of the local security forces to maintain order is questionable, at best, given the mutiny of a faction of the military and the disintegration of the EMMO combined response team. EAC voted and strongly favored recommending to the Ambassador that he should request authorized departure status for the Mission.

12. (C) The DCM reported that there had clearly been a mutiny among the military forces with those dissatisfied barricaded in the Camp Capsat, the location of the majority of the military's arsenal. During the day there had been a peaceful rally at 13 Mai and looting at various stores outside of town, including a major ex-pat grocery store and Indian owned shops. Also of concern was the reference from the rally to a three day countdown leading to some type of action on Wednesday. A review of the Embassy tripwires shows that we have now passed five (5) of those leading to AD with debate about three (3) others. In addition, Post crossed three (3) tripwires that would lead to ordered departure. The electronic survey conducted by the DCM among the American Mission revealed that, at this time, at least 20 people are interested in AD. This is close to triple the amount who were interested in the AD option a few weeks ago when a similar survey was taken.

13. (C) DAO reported that EMMO forces had broken down into three individual forces and were no longer working in a coordinated fashion. Both the Ministry of Defense and the Secretary General of the Ministerial Council would not speak to DAO directly, but the conversation indicated that they have no plans in place concerning the security of foreigners. At present, the military is divided and has no effective leadership. The president no longer trusts his military and tried to send his presidential guard to obtain additional weapons, but they were turned back at Camp Capsat. It was also noted that military personnel who followed the orders of the President to break up the rallies last week are being personally threatened by TGV's forces so much so that they were allowed to check out AK-47s and handguns to ensure the safety of their families. The situation is fluid and it is impossible to predict the status of the military and if they will be able to respond to maintain order and security.

4.(C) RSO reported that it is not possible now to ensure adequate Government of Madagascar security for the Embassy community. Roadblocks are being randomly placed by the opposition and are changed frequently, making routes for moving through the city unpredictable. Fewer flights are now scheduled to fly in and out of Antananarivo. Many of the rallies take place within one mile of the Embassy. During the last week, EMMO forces used tear gas and warning shots to break up crowds for four consecutive days, with the crowds sometimes moving directly past the Embassy warehouse. Information provided by SD has been scaled back, somewhat, in an attempt to better protect the safety of the SD members

after one member was arbitrarily arrested and subsequently a victim of police brutality. There is a fragmentation of security forces, with debates in loyalties or disagreement about responsibilities. The military can no longer provide any support. RSO strongly recommended that the Embassy should move to authorized departure.

5 (C) RAO reported that the TGV rally at 13 Mai was peaceful on Monday morning, with two or three thousand in attendance. The president's rally had about the same number meeting at the stadium and was also peaceful. In the area of the looting, the area had many people, evidence of road blocks and burning tires. However, security forces were present and reinforcements arrived in military vehicles. The forces restored order to the area.

6.(C) The Ambassador did not attend this EAC meeting, as with short notice he went to the ceremony announcing the convening of the National Consultative Conference (NCC), a long awaited effort to end the crisis. Both sides had agreed to this meeting.

7.(C) The EAC determined by a majority vote (12 for, two against and one abstention) to recommend to the Ambassador that he request authorized departure. The Embassy would be opened for business as usual on Tuesday. Shuttles will run to the Embassy leaving early to avoid congestion and crowds in the downtown area. A town meeting for American mission employees and family members will be held at the DCR on Tuesday at 1630. A second meeting for the broader American community will be held at the DCR on Wednesday at 1700.

MARQUARDT